



Afternoon Alert - Friday, March 24, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All broadcasters led with reports on the Upper House Budget Committee session this morning, during which Prime Minister Abe denied Moritomo Gakuen President Kagoike's allegation that Mrs. Abe gave him a donation of 1 million yen. However, the opposition parties decided to call for Mrs. Abe to provide sworn testimony at the Diet.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump to nominate Hagerty as ambassador to Japan

All commercial networks reported in their noon news programs that the White House announced on Thursday that President Trump intends to nominate William Hagerty as the U.S. ambassador to Japan. The broadcasters reported that Hagerty lived in Tokyo for about three years when he worked at a consulting firm in the 1980s and that the Trump administration expects Hagerty to utilize his expertise as a business consultant in trade negotiations with Japan.

NHK aired a report on the White House announcement on its satellite channel this morning, speculating that Hagerty will play a key role in trade talks with Japan to implement President Trump's "America First" policy. The broadcaster also said that GOJ officials are welcoming the nomination of Hagerty by saying that the President's nomination of someone he trusts demonstrates the importance his administration attaches to U.S.-Japan relations. The network added, however, that Hagerty's diplomatic skills remain to be seen and he will be put to the test in dealing with such pressing issues as North Korea's nuclear and missile development and China's maritime advancement at a time when the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly tense.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga stated during a news conference this morning that the GOJ is strongly hoping that Hagerty, who was on the Trump transition team and is trusted by the President, will work to further strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Asahi, Nikkei, and Sankei ran similar reports online.

- [Japan protests S. Korea plan to conduct drills near disputed isles](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Akira Amari: Japan cannot refuse to negotiate FTA with U.S., should move forward with 11-member TPP](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Speed up conclusion of EPA between Japan, EU to fight protectionism](#) (The Japan News)
- [Establish national stance before becoming permanent member of UN Security Council](#) (Asahi)

SECURITY

[Japan extends SDF mission in South Sudan for two months](#)

TV Asahi reported that the Abe cabinet decided this morning to extend the current deployment of an SDF engineering unit to the peacekeeping operations in South Sudan for two months until the end of May to prepare for its planned withdrawal from the nation. The GOJ also decided to continue the deployment of four SDF officers to the headquarters of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) until February 2018.

[Okinawa assembly delivers written protest against tire incident to U.S., Japanese governments](#)

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo wrote that a group of Okinawa prefectural assembly members delivered a written opinion on Thursday to the U.S. Consulate General Naha, the Defense Ministry's Okinawa Bureau, and other relevant entities in Okinawa. The assembly unanimously adopted the written opinion last week in response to the recent incident in which tires fell from a U.S. military helicopter at Camp Hansen. The opinion calls on the U.S. military not to conduct external lift training over civilian areas. The papers wrote that an official at the government and external affairs office of the Marine Corps Installations Pacific Command told the group that the Marines do not carry out such training over civilian areas. According to Okinawa Times, one of the assembly members told reporters after meeting with the Marine official that the U.S. military's statement sounded like an "excuse." Ryukyu Shimpo wrote that Ambassador in charge of Okinawan Affairs Kawata commented on the local assembly's call for the closure of Landing Zone Falcon at Camp Hansen, saying at the MOFA Okinawa office that the U.S. military has told Japan that the landing zone is indispensable.

- [National Police Agency reports steep rise in cyberattacks on IoT devices](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 23](#) (Nikkei)
- [Abe denies allegations in scandal-hit school chief's sworn testimony](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gist of CCS Suga's news conference on Moritomo Gakuen chief's testimony](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Diet should call Abe's wife to testify over land sale scandal](#) (Asahi)
- [Gist of Lower House constitution commission hearing, March 23](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Experts at Lower House commission question adding emergency provisions to constitution](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

ECONOMY

- [BOJ chief denies possibility of raising gov't debt yield target](#) (Kyodo News)
- [More big companies gobbling startups for tech, talent](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Foreign experts to provide advice on Monju decommissioning](#) (Asahi)
- [Koizumi calls on JA to help farmers acquire certification for their produce](#) (Mainichi)
- [Vietnamese technical interns exploited under grueling working conditions](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

EDUCATION

- [Tokyo to build English-language immersion facility for kids in 2018](#) (The Japan Times)

SOCIETY

- [Suicide in Japan falls below 22,000 for first time in 22 years](#) (Yomiuri Evening edition)